PRACTICAL PIETY

MUSIC HALL SERMONS

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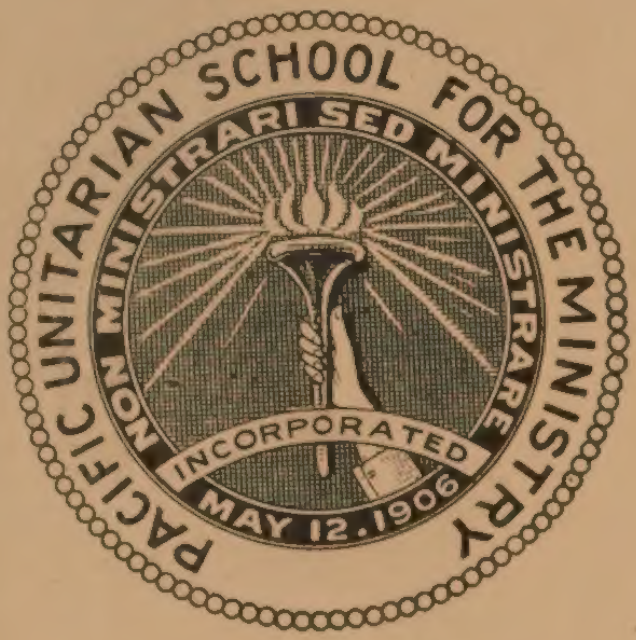

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PRACTICAL PIETY

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These four sermons are dedicated to the unknown friends whose generosity made the Central Music Hall meetings possible, in the hope that the potency of their dollars may be increased by this extension of the preacher's words.

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THE ECONOMIES OF RELIGION.

HE RAISETH UP THE POOR OUT OF THE DUST THAT HE MAY SET HIM WITH PRINCES.—*Psalms cxiii., 7, 8.*

I honor the prudence that foresees the rainy day and anticipates the wants of old age. I would not have man less provident than the ant that does have a care for the non-productive winter. Before I begin to talk about the Economies of Religion, let me admit that there are some phases of religion that must be classed among the last luxuries of the wealthy; they are too costly for many, perhaps for most of you to indulge in. The religion of outward form is very expensive. It is a luxury that demands very good clothes, and a costly church to show them off in. Impressive architecture, beautiful interiors, artistic music, professionally rendered, are all desirable, but they are scarcely for those who are struggling to feed and train growing families.

I believe in this material world and all the good it contains. I believe in creature comforts. I have never seen a house too elegant to be the home of man, the carpet too sumptuous to receive the foot of

woman. I believe in silks and satins, when there are enough of them to go around; when they are not procured at the cost of higher interests and universal sympathies. I believe in no religion that advocates mendicancy. If Tennyson's northern farmer overreaches the truth when he says,

"Proputty, proputty 's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I 'm blest
If it is n' the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it 's the best,"

yet there is great truth in his statement that—

"Tis n' them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it 's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl 's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad."

Poverty, though not the "poor in a loomp," is bad. Poverty of every kind, material and spiritual, outward and inward, is to be deplored, and so far as lies within our power is to be avoided by all legitimate means.

Having said so much, it is time to say that there is that in religion that nerves the laborer's arm and strengthens the toiler's hand. Religion will "raise the poor from the dust." It enables him "to guide his affairs with discretion." Religion alone will

bring permanent relief from the much talked of but little understood "hard times," which are always upon us. Let us look at the economic forces of religion.

I. *Religion reduces our wants.*—Vice is very extravagant. Sin is expensive. Passion never counts the cost. The selfish soul has towering needs. In proportion as one is deficient in character is he dependent upon externals for his position, and the externals are the things that cost money. It takes a great deal of money to get "into society." But a little religion of the right kind brings society to us in rich and loving measure. "Here is another hundred dollars for you, my son," said the wealthy father as his boy started for college, "you have not got much brains, and less persistency, so you will need the more money to get through with." A little religion goes very far in reducing the expenses of life. Without it we ache for a coach, with it walking becomes a privilege; then a mansion is our idea, now a cottage becomes regal; then the woman longs for power, now she rejoices in the opportunity of serving; then she needs roses, ribbons and rouge to make her beautiful, now the kindliness in her eye, the gentleness of her voice, and the grace of helping hands make her beautiful without these. There are those of whom we

ative moments into weeks and years; that our energies may be directed to higher, and on that account, less costly, pursuits.

II. *Religion teaches us to make judicious investments.*—It says to the shop girl, "Adorn your mind before you hang trinkets in your ears." To the clerk, "Burn not that in your mouth that you may need on your back." "I buy no books except for pressing needs. Last year I bought fifteen hundred dollars' worth, this year I shall not order two hundred dollars' worth. I may want the money for cannon," wrote Theodore Parker to John P. Hale, in 1856, as his prophetic soul anticipated the dread struggle for liberty. This is the insight and the discrimination that religion will give to every young man and woman It inspires them to save their money, to buy the munitions of war that are necessary to wage successfully the battle of life. Religion says to the father, "Better give your son a conviction, upon which he may ride upon a crusade against wrong, ignorance and poverty, than to give him a horse to ride upon the boulevard, and the former may cost less than the latter. Better a noble enthusiasm, a great desire to realize what may seem to be the impossible, than the aimless drawing of the ribbons over the finest thoroughbred in a way that will leave the man poorer

and weaker after every drive; for indolent indulgence debilitates the soul as opiates do the body." Religion says to the mother, "Fine clothes will draw to the side of your daughter many suitors, but a fine disposition will draw better ones." Religion teaches the father that of all the life insurance companies the Eternal Life is the most trustworthy, the assessments for which are paid in good deeds, the death losses settled out of the accumulations of character. Religion pleads with the parent and says, "If you can leave your children no other heritage, leave them a spotless name; let the fires of their lives be kindled by the flame of your devotion and the glowing embers of your loyalty. Giving them this you give them a wealth that death itself cannot take away."

III. *Religion multiplies our resources.*—It increases our producing power. It is itself productive capital. Are you too poor to travel and see the marvels of other climes? So was Henry Thoreau; but God met him on Walden Pond, and his eyes discovered more of the divine and the beautiful in the woods of Concord, on the beach of Cape Cod, in the Maine forests, than most travelers see on the Rhine or amid the Alps. "Why go to Italy to see the marvels of a sunset while you have it at your own back door?" asks Emerson. It is because religion has not opened

our eyes to the near marvel and the besetting glory. What though

"Cleon hath a million acres,
Yet the landscape I.
* * * * *
Cleon sees no charm in nature,
In a daisy I;
Cleon hears no anthem singing
In the sea and sky;
Nature sings to me forever,
Earnest listener I;
State for state, with all attendants,
Who will change? Not I."

The resources of a religious spirit are never measured by its surroundings. Gœthe studied and wrote in a bare attic room, without even an arm chair. Doré conjured from the hidden depths of his own soul those weird forms, which, once having been seen, haunt you forevermore, in a room naked as a carpenter shop. The young lady who courts art as a worldly accomplishment gives great attention to her tools, Her pencil, easel and palette must all be artistically conceived before she can begin her work; while he who is touched with the religious inspiration that impels him to art makes his beginning, like Benjamin West, with a piece of charcoal and a barn door. The common clay in the Roman hills, which to the citi-

zens yielded but mud, Angelo turned into the ochre with which he illuminated his matchless frescoes.

Thus it is that religion "raises the poor out of the dust and places them among princes"; enables them to meet their poverty with ampler resources. When we get at the heart of the matter we shall find that men and women die daily, more from want of religion than from want of medicine. Ten thousand die from heart and head starvation for every one that dies from bodily starvation. The skilled physician knows that even our bodily ailments must be reached through moral rather than through physical forces. Dr. Brown-Sequard, a high medical authority, has said, "Bread pills in the hands of a trusted physician will do more than the best medicines in the hands of one who cannot inspire such confidence." "Give me a great thought that I may refresh myself with it," said the dying Herder; "Read me something from Paul, something that has got meat in it," stammered Lute Taylor, dying in the midst of a half developed life. This is the refreshment and the nourishment which religion gives. We all need it, more than the German philosopher or the unschooled poet of Wisconsin.

Do I discover a twinkle in your eye? do you uspect me of having indulged in a bit of special

pleading, a more or less ingenious way of begging for a "cause"? The cause of religion has no need of beggars. God is no pauper. The church that is classified among "charitable institutions," and receives its support from your "*charities*," has little claim upon my sympathies. I plead for that life of thought and feeling that makes this world a hospitable home for the homeless; that gives the solitary a sense of kinship with all that is human, that transforms the forge, the workshop and the counting room into academies of the spirit, wherein the laborer may become a student of eternal things. I plead for that love of truth that makes the laboratory and the observatory sacred altars of religion, and all truth seekers and truth tellers, priests and prophets of the soul, teachers of the lesson best taught by the greatest prophet of souls when he said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." Thus it is that the infinite resources become our resources, the divine bounty overflows our poverty, and "the poor are raised out of the dust," and are enabled "to stand among princes," where they belong.

BREAD *VERSUS* IDEAS.

IS NOT THE LIFE MORE THAN MEAT, AND THE BODY THAN RAIMENT?—*Matt. vi. 25.*

I would discuss briefly and with great frankness the relations of bread to ideas, of body to mind, of the physical to the spiritual. I do not wish to beg the question. I believe in the sacredness of every fact, and so I admit at the outset that this present life of ours is squarely grounded in the physical. The diseased mind often springs from a diseased body. The morals of a city are related to the sanitary conditions of its streets. "Health keeps atheism in the dark," it is said. I have always thought that Calvinism was related to dyspepsia, and that probably the only real believers in that dreary doctrine to-day are those suffering from chronic gastric inflammation. Probably the best way to do away with the gloomy "Decrees" and "Fore-ordination" is to reduce the number of torpid livers in the community. Proper attention to diet may bring more sunshine into some souls than a course of religious reading would. I remember that a gill of alcohol will not only make a wise man a fool,

but will make a good man a rascal. It will change a devotee into a criminal. A tunk on the head will make an imbecile out of a philosopher. Professor Bain tells us that "bodily afflictions not infrequently change the moral nature." The brain takes about one-fifth of the blood of the system. When the blood is impoverished of course the workings of the brain deteriorate, and the problems of the minister as well as those of the physician grow complicated. Sir Henry Holland, noted scholar and physician to the Queen, while exploring some of the deep mines in the Hartz mountains became so weary that he could not remember a word of the German language, and he was led out by a guide with whom he could not communicate. When he had eaten and rested he was again the accomplished German scholar. Doctors sometimes detect a disease of the brain by a peculiar delicacy of the senses, or vigor of the imagination. People are affected by their surroundings. Hard work and poor food will dull the brightest intellect, and harden the tenderest conscience. The stern character and massive intellect of Scotland, the slovenly habit and sensuous poetry of Spain, find their explanation in the climate and natural surroundings, as Buckle and Draper have shown. Let a nervous, energetic, whittling, whistling Yankee from New Eng-

land live twenty years in Louisiana, and he becomes a tardy, drawling, shambling fellow, who lolls listlessly into town upon the back of a mule, with a gunny sack for saddle, a rope for a bridle rein; proud, happy and indolent as any native.

Facts of this class teach us to be respectful of body, and mindful of its needs. They prove that the gloomy anchorite in his cave, the howling dervish hacking his body with rusty cutlass, and the "aerial birds," as they were called, who, like Simon Stylites, on stony pillars tortured their nerves and starved their veins in order to overcome the flesh and win heaven, were not only wrong in theory, but wicked in practice. These facts tempt us to reverse the Bible text and say, "Take great thought as to what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink, and give large heed to the body as to what ye shall put on." Such facts compel us to recognize as divine the inspiration that enables father and mother to tear themselves from dear associations, face the hardships of the wilderness, battle with the fierce beasts of the forests, and the fiercer poison of the swamps, that thereby their children may perchance escape the thraldom of matter. I understand and honor the thousands who toil and moil in season and out of season for food and raiment. I can understand why good men withdraw their patronage

from living issues, absent themselves from church and schools in order to be more sure of bread.

I discover the grain of truth at the bottom of the Gradgrind philosophy that says, "Let your children be educated for practical ends. Give them something tangible, something that will make them successful bread winners." Poetry, art, letters and music are being quietly elbowed to one side in many of our later theories of education in order that the multiplication and interest tables may be more glorified. These are supposed to have in them large life-saving power. This line of reasoning leads to the apotheosis of the dollar. The deity at whose shrine America is ever prone to bow in united worship is a paper idol, the *Te Deum* of which is, "All hail the Almighty Dollar!"

Having said so much in the interests of bread, let us face another class of facts as startling, imperative and scientific as these. If indigestion breeds Calvinism, so fear and mental anxiety bring dyspepsia. If there be soul misery the body will surely be lean and the face haggard. Bain is a writer suspected of materialistic tendency, but he admits that "the influence of mental changes upon the body is supported by an equal array of testimony." Indeed, will we not all admit that the thrilling pages in human his-

tory are those which tell of men rising superior to surroundings, compelling circumstances to yield?—such pages as tell of Hannibal leading his hosts across the ice-blockaded Alps, or Washington and his patriots marking the frozen roads of Valley Forge with the blood that flowed from naked feet. Ideas have flamed into a glory which has encircled the globe, rising from the fires that were built to destroy them. Hearts have fought off disease and death for the sake of loving and protecting others. Mind has emitted a light that never wanes upon brows pallid with disease. It has painted death-blanched cheeks with immortal beauty. Paschal, Shelley, Channing, Theodore Parker, Starr King, and hundreds of others in all departments of thought and philanthropy have dipped their ladles into the boiling oil of thought heated from within. They made their mark, won their race like the steamer that burns its own decks in order to have fuel enough to make the harbor. Much of the immortal literature fell not from hands sustained by steady pulse in elegant conditions, but was thrown off by hands trembling with aching nerves. Its sentences were born upon burdened breath. Many of its gems have been written by men like Robert Burns, so closely encased in the inhospitable matter, the prison cells which we politely call

environments, that like the prisoners they were, they had to cut their own veins in order to find ink intense enough to write their thoughts. I have seen beardless boys lift haggard bodies from death-stricken couches to brighten again the rusty gun, and to march once more to life, in obedience to the summons to do battle for ideas the heart loved. I have seen trembling women walk with transcendent steadiness through clotted gore, that they might stay the costly flow from severed arteries. I have seen, and so have you, mothers fight their way back from death's door into the possession of some poor fragment of a body, chiefly by love's weapons, because the youngest born was not strong enough to do without a mother's care. There is no meaning to the story of the pioneer's endurance if it does not prove the superiority of mind to body, if it does not show that a moral purpose, an idea, apparently the most imponderable and intangible thing in the universe, is the sublime element in that which is noblest in the story of America's settlement.

No, friends, it will not do to trust too much to *circumstances*, for the equation of our life cannot be wrought out without introducing that large factor that is represented by the "*center*-stance" as Emerson somewhere calls it. What will he who is trying

to build up life from the bread end alone, do with the most unique and in many respects the greatest of Americans? Untutored parentage, a home in the sub-aqueous and malarial flats of southern Illinois, coarse companions, a few books,—out of these conditions there towered the columnar figure, whose name will glow with perennial freshness upon that obelisk where honor inscribes the names of the saviors of men. When the names of the petted sons of fortune, the recipients of what we call "good advantages" will have gone down into eternal oblivion, the name of Abraham Lincoln will be a star toward which the admiring eyes of earth's noblest will be turned in evidence that "life *is* more than meat." It was not bread, but ideas that made him great. The problem of the century was somehow focalized in the loving heart that lay within that awkward frame. The soul took up the burden. It moulded matter. It wove its own body. Carpenter, the artist of the Emancipation Proclamation, says that if the assassin's hand had allowed the creating spirit to have gone on chiseling that face twenty years more, it would have been one of the fairest as well as one of the noblest faces in the land. Do not wring in the law of exceptions in this case. With Lowell I hold that Lincoln was made "out of the very earth,

unancestered, unprivileged and unknown, to show us how much truth, how much magnanimity, how much statecraft await the call of opportunity in simple manhood, when it believes in the justice of God, and the worth of man."

Let this "brave, far-seeing man" illustrate the power of any soul that believes in ideas more than in bread, in life more than meat, in the forces of mind as superior to the forces of matter. This is good science as well as good religion. If the minister needs the help of a doctor to save a soul from a hell that is to be, the doctor needs the help of a minister to save the soul from the hell that now is.

What is the result thus far? Have I set up a hopeless paradox? Must it be forever the old battle of bread *against* ideas? Bodily wants *against* living principles? Must we select one *or* the other? Let us be careful and make no mistakes here. The miser concludes to stand for the bread line. He believes that in the long run money is the best thing. The business man who burns all his energies in the store, and carries in his heart nothing but cinders and ashes home at night; the woman who concludes that she must "put on a little style if one is ever to be anybody," who buys her daughter a new dress with the money that ought to be spent for her schooling; the

man who agrees with my tailor when he says, "God made man, but the tailor made the gentleman," all decide for bread as against ideas. On the other hand, monk, nun, and Protestant devotee, who profess a contempt for the good things of this world, who are in a hurry to go where they are not yet wanted—else they'd be sent for—take sides against the bread and what it stands for. Now, all these make a sad mistake. The cook loses her appetite in the cooking. The external show, intended to introduce the son and daughter into society, shuts the gate in their face. The woman that studies the fashion plates most is generally ill dressed. The cultivated milliner would not be seen wearing the bonnet she has prepared for her ambitious customer. The dressmaker is generally better dressed, artistically speaking, than her best customer, for she dresses to live, while some of the others seem to live to dress. Equally disappointing are those who, in this divorce of bread and ideas, take sides with the soul against the body. They who oppose this world and its material good are oftentimes the most material in their worship, and unspiritual in their dream of heaven. They who have most contempt for body are oftentimes haunted by the most gross desires and the most lustful appetites.

The truth is, one is necessary to the other. Bread and ideas are different factors in the same reality of life. Science and religion both insist that the word "soul" stands for the central verity, to which the body ministers, and from which the body derives its right to be. Ignoring soul you have no use for body. Recognizing it you cannot be too respectful to body. These are two parts of the one whole, the life that now is. What hurts one must hurt both.

> "This world's no blot for us,
> Nor blank —it means intensely, and means good:
> To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

Let us beware, then, of that undevout ignorance that either offers indignity to body or is indifferent to the needs of mind. Let us revere the holy currents that go throbbing through the arteries to feet, hand and brain, because they sail our ships of thought. These red rivers are sacred rivers because they float our affection and land their choicest cargoes in the citadel of mind.

The philosophy of evolution is yet to render to religion and morals a service as great as that which it has already rendered to science. It is to teach that *soul* is the latest product of God's creating power, and that the latest is the highest. The greatest thing in man is mind, ideas are the regnant forces that con-

trol and amend all that is below. Hail, then, you "Bread Winner!" Heaven's benediction is yours. Get bread, money, lands, houses, if in the getting you are expanding your soul, ripening your heart, increasing your stock of ideas: but if you get these things for any other purpose, you get them at your peril. Luxury sought for itself ends in rottenness of body and selfishness of spirit. He who works only for his surroundings, expecting happiness from externals, will find life at last becoming a scramble,—

"Every door is bared with gold and opens but to golden keys.
Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow."

To him

"The jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels."

He who tries to find bread, money or beauty from without, rather than by developing them from within, through tears or through frowns, will be compelled to exclaim:

"Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth.
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the fool!"

To struggle for bread more than for ideas; to trust matter more than spirit; to favor body more than soul; to believe in hand-skill more than heart-skill, may make Vanderbilts, but it will make no Peabodys. It may give manners, but no morals. It may teach you a little logic, but no song. It may give eyes, but no vision; give sight, but no insight. It may teach you to plod, but not to fly—nay, not even to walk in noble, manlike fashion.

But you say once more, "I must live, and consequently must make bread the prime object of life." I don't know about that. If in living you are to go about drying out your soul, shriveling your mind until it rattles like dry beans in a pod, perhaps you had "better die," as George McDonald once said in this city, "and go to God where you belong." But I deny the alternative. Season your life with ideas, and your bread will be the more sure and far more palatable. Make Spirit and it will give you Body. Seek Soul and the other things will be added unto you. Find love in your life and the energies that sow and reap, that stitch and bake, will not be want

ing. Given a great concern for the kingdom of God, and a splendid purpose to establish it here on earth, and you may be sure that bread and clothes and houses will be looked after. "The life *is* more than meat." This text never leads to aimless and listless living. The man who believes in the Providence of ideas does not go begging from door to door for bread and coat, any more than does the lily go tramping for its beauty. The tramp belongs to a very different order of being. They who most appreciate mind best understand the need of body and are most competent to provide for the same. No, it is no longer bread *versus* ideas, but bread *and* ideas; bread by means of ideas. Let ideas assume command and the battle for bread and meat is more easily won. To my thinking it is time that the old lines between heaven and earth, between religion and business, be destroyed forever. The piety that is practical recognizes that the supreme thing is *to do the best thing within your power in the best way you can, and to do it now and here, and to keep on doing it, from this time forth forevermore, world without end.* It matters not whether that thing be baking bread or composing symphonies, making horseshoes or singing psalms. They all belong to the religious life if truly done. Food and raiment become as much a part of

such piety as the petals are to the rose, or as the feathers are to the bird.

Yes, ideas vindicate the seeker and encourage the seeking. With his thoughts the human touches consciously the divine; the Finite merges itself into the Infinite. He who can measure a star is greater than that star. The thought of infinity is the nearest thing to Infinity itself. Gird your loins, then, and press forward with renewed courage in this race for ideas. In this chase do you escape from the trammels of matter into the fellowship of spirit. In this search we cease to bear the image of the animal from which we came and begin to assume the features of the angel that we may become. By the power of ideas we cease to be slaves and rise to the dignity of freemen. The shackles of bigotry, ignorance and superstition fall off, and the soul, unfettered, revels in a boundless universe of truth, beauty and love. These are the only perennial elements of the universe. Empires with their external glory have gone. Continents whereon were once gathered tumultuous tides of life have been engulfed, and now the ceaseless waves of ocean cover them. Mountains in their grim strength are being dissolved by the relentless chemistry of nature. Wind, sun, rain and frost file their sides, chisel their height, and the time will be when

they are not, but an unseen, an intangible idea endures.

Where now are the dynasties of the Orient? All that is left of them is found in Vedic hymn, Buddhistic wisdom, Persian lore and Egyptian scroll. Where now lies the glory of Solomon, the power of his kingdom, the beauty of his temple? They are found only in the imperishable prophets, the indestructible beauty of the Psalms and the incomparable charm of Job. Grecian power and glory are lost to sight, but Greece is still young in the songs of her Homer, in the beauty of her Venus of Milo, her Elgin Marbles and the writings of Plato, still the epitome of libraries. The Roman empire collapsed like an exploded balloon from too great an inflation; but the Roman idea embodied in Roman law is still the inexhaustible fountain of modern jurisprudence. The old Vikings no longer sail the northern seas, but their Sagas, the garden in which were planted their ideas, bloom with fresh beauty under the genial warmth of modern scholarship. No longer does the Druid bow beneath the mistletoe that hangs on British oak, or is the harp heard in Tara's hall, but Keltic ideas woven into the Bardic fragments of Taliessin and others remain to yield to Emerson "more true poetry than volumes of British classics."

Thus is it ever; ideas, the high price of which tempt us to shrink from the purchase, endure, priceless gems in the cabinet of the universe, outshining and outlasting the stars themselves; for ideas are "the thoughts of God," which slowly, painfully, man, his child, "is learning to think after him," and

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world has never lost."

PRESENT SANCTITIES.

PUT OFF THY SHOES FROM OFF THY FEET, FOR THE PLACE WHEREON THOU STANDEST IS HOLY GROUND.—*Exodus iii, 5.*

The place whereon you and I stand now, and here, is holy ground. Why?

1. *Because we are standing in the presence of the Eternal Mystery.* All around us burns the divine flame that illumines without consuming. The burning bush is before us, and out of its central glory speaks the voice of the living God. I deal with facts, and not fancy. The ground whereon we stand teems with mystic life, throbs with the pulse of Infinite power. The snowflake is rayed like a star. The angled facets of the grain of sand are polished by the Geometrician of the heavens. The granite boulder was shaped by the same laws that lift the Alps so high, and line with gold and silver the bowels of the Sierras. The pebble is a colony of atoms, builded together according to a pattern designed in the same council chambers that fitted the heart of man to that of woman and caused the head of the babe to nestle

on the mother's breast. The blade of grass is instinct with the secret of the pine. The commonest tree is an embodied providence to unnumbered thousands of fellow beings.

> "There is never a leaf nor blade too mean
> To be some happy creature's palace."

Where we stand is holy ground.

> "Whether we look, or whether we listen,
> We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
> Every clod feels a stir of might,
> An instinct within it that reaches and towers.
> And, groping blindly above it for light,
> Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
> The flush of life may well be seen
> Thrilling back over hills and valleys."

Day floods the ground whereon we stand with glory. Night shadows it with awe. Summer paints it in beauty. Winter jewels it with diamonds "of purest rays serene." Here is holy ground, for all the infinities of space center here for us. From this spot, like the spokes in a wheel, ray all the forces of matter, and Nature has rimmed this wheel with the circlet of her laws. Bring your microscope, telescope, spectroscope, and solvents; let the botanist, geologist and astronomer teach us all they know; let chemistry, optics and the mechanic arts do for us all

they can; let us give our lives to the use of these tools and the study of these lines, and then we shall die in old age, sobered with the thought that we have just begun to study the sanctities of this little spot of ground whereon we stand.

2. *This is holy ground because it is sanctified with human nature.* Under our feet is the dust of the toiling generations that have gone before. We walk among the graves of unnumbered ancestors. We talk of the "new West," with a history only a century long. But every foot of this ground is saturated with mothers' tears, colored with heroes' blood, and every new grave adds sacredness to the ground whereon we stand to-day. It is only our short memories that put a boundary around our graveyards. "God's acre" is everywhere. We cannot go where the dead are not. Petty are the genealogies of the books. Insignificant are the titles of descent which the noblest aristocrat can boast of; but great is the real ancestry of the meanest beggar. From the most primitive man up through experimenting, blundering ages has he come. Alexander and Cæsar, Socrates and Newton, King Arthur and King Alfred, Wellington and Washington are his inheritance. The graves of Lincoln, Garfield and General Grant are guarded night and day by armed sentinels. This is a grateful nation's per-

petual token of respect; but each one of us is a sentinel placed on duty to guard sacred memories greater than Lincoln's or Grant's, the memory of humanity, the great man universal of which these are but fragments. We talk of ancient history, the myths of Greece and the legends of Rome. I tell you the traditions of Chicago are as sacred to us did we but know them. Horeb, Mount Ida, the seven sacred hills of Rome are secular grounds compared with the sanctity of the ground whereon we now stand. Over this lake shore hover the triumphs and defeats of men, the joys and sorrows of women, out of which may yet grow legends as full of poetry as those of Troy, as gracious as those of Athens, as religious as those of Eden. The first white man who built his shanty on the marshy bank of the Chicago river, built in obedience to the same deep, unconscious tuition that taught Moses to build wiser than the Pharaohs, and to shape out of Egypt's slaves a power vastly superior to Egypt.

I tell you, friends, to realize the sanctities of to-day is more religous than to pine for the sanctities of the long ago. To see the spirit of God in the striving men and women here in Illinios is higher vision than that which limits the revelations of God to Old Testament miracle or to New Testament parable. If you expect to find your soul thrilled with the Divine voice

as was Moses', you must seek the flaming bush, burning but unconsumed, here in Chicago, not at Horeb. It burned there for Moses, it burns here for you.

3. *Whereon you stand is holy ground because you stand there.* "Wherever McGregor sits, there is the head of the table." Wherever the foot of man is placed, there is holy ground. I do not go in search of saint or martyr; I do not mean General This or Captain That, not Duke nor Squire; but, put the foot of any body that contains a human soul on any bit of ground and you have sanctified it with the choicest product of nature. There are no distillations so rare as the love of a human heart; no forces under the sun so mysterious as those that work in the human will. "The ground whereon you stand is holy ground" because you stand there, *you* the heir of all the ages, *you* in whose better thoughts live the immortal dead, —"the choir invisible" who sing in your joy, whose triumphs nerve you "to deeds of daring rectitude."

The self-sacrifice of the martyrs instructs you to "scorn the miserable aims that end in self." Your brain is fertile with the deposits of your ancestors. Your blood is rich with the triumphs of your forerunners. Your heart is made tender with the tears of the mothers that were unappreciated in life, and are forgotten in death.

Not only on account of your inheritance, but on account of your prospects, do you consecrate the ground you stand on. You are standing at the near end of a line that reaches farther into the future than into the past. It is your opportunity to speak the word to the child that will go on enlarging the boundaries of truth, making music throughout all eternity. The mountaineer with a puff of breath sounds a note on his Alpine horn that goes echoing among the peaks and around the crags until miles and miles away, it strikes the ear of a fellow mountaineer, who, with another puff of breath, sends back the melodious though lusty response. So is it your opportunity, where you now stand, to breathe into your trumpet that which will echo and re-echo amid the hills and valleys of the future, sure to find response in the life of some climber yet to come. Says Emerson: "It is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature, as if the world was finished a long time ago. As the world was plastic in the hands of God, so it is ever to such influences as we bring to it. To ignorance and sin alone it is flint." Remember this, friends, and then you will understand your opportunity. An unfinished world is about you, waiting your finishing touches. You, a builder, are standing in the presence of the incom-

pleted walls of the temple of God. It is your opportunity to add to it, here a stone and there an ornament.

I am not dealing in ideal extravagance. "The one thing of most value in the world is an active soul," says Emerson. And I tell you there is more of God to you in the palpitations of your own heart when it is stirred with pity for a dog; there is more of the divine glory made manifest to you in the rose that has bloomed through your care; there is more of the infinite mercy for you in the sympathy you have for the besotted tramp that called on you yesterday; in the patient care you bestow upon the sickly, dirty child that does not belong to you, than there is in all the bibles that have descended from the elder days of Asia; bibles that require a lexicon to read, a theologian to interpret, and which necessitate creeds and conventions to decide upon their meanings to you. Miss Cleveland, in her essay on Charlemagne, says: "If the singers had been content to let Arthur alone, we might now have had a history of him." And so I sometimes think if the theologians would let you poor souls alone, and give you a chance, you would find God for yourselves, and that there would come to you a revelation of the Almighty as there did to Moses.

Science shows you to-day marvels a thousand times more awe-inspiring and convincing than the most majestic of old time miracles. Geology tells of a Genesis more sublime than that in the Pentateuch. The Sermon on the Mount is verified and enforced by the facts of social science when the rhetoric of the preacher fails. Oh, we talk too much of "mediation" and "mediators," and too little of the truth that comes first hand to the soul—the salvation that is direct from God. After all, he does not reveal himself by proxy, but by his proximity. "He is nigh unto all of us." God is the present, pressing loving power within and around your life and mine where we now stand, or else He is nowhere. He is in the burning bush of October by our roadside, that flames but is not consumed; or else he is a myth. He reveals himself to you through the little Messiah, that you tucked into his cozy crib to-night, or else you are mistaken about the Bethlehem manger.

"He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry out the wealth of the Indies." It takes a revealing soul to understand God's revelation. There is that back of the eye without which the best eye would be blind as a policeman's lantern.

"Where you stand is holy ground," because you are the God-detecting instrument. "Where man

can read God directly the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings," says our Seer. The most that these transcripts of other men's discoveries of God can do for us is to show us where to look ; they cannot see for us. Nor can we look through their eyes. We turn in vain the leaves of big books to find

> "The subtler meaning of what roses say."

When

> "In there breaks the sudden rose herself,
> Over us, under, round us every side,
> Nay, in and out the tables and the chairs,
> And musty volumes, big books and all,—
> Buries us with a glory, young once more,
> Pouring heaven into this shut house of life."

"Whereon thou standest is holy ground." My text holds at once the most damaging lie of theology and the most inspiring truth in religion. Let us look at the error first. If you read in it of the special sanctity of a far off time and place, unattainable and unknown to other places, you read that which will bring confusion into your thinking, and loneliness into your life. It will paralyze present joy and chill present duty. If you are led by this story to suspect that God was nearer to Mount Horeb four thousand years ago than he is to-day to Pike's Peak,—except

when Moses was there,—it will cheapen your science and probably mar many things which ought to be sacred to you.

But if it teaches you of the immanent God, whose glory ever breaks upon an open eye, whose voice is ever heard by the uncovered ear, that, given a Moses at the foot of Pike's Peak, he there would hear of the summons to stand with unsandaled feet in the divine presence, life itself becomes a continuous book of revelation. God is the Immeasurable Presence. All history is Holy Bible. All science is revelation, and all struggling for the good, the true and the beautiful becomes religion.

Do not misunderstand me. I would not have a dead level monotony where everything is diversity. There are uplands and lowlands of the spirit as well as of nature. Soul has its valley and snow-capped peaks as well as the earth. Sinai and Olivet do tower sublimely above other heights of the spirit, but God floods all peaks with daylight and mantles every summit with darkness.

The light that glistens upon the frozen crown of Mont Blanc, ripens the cottager's cherries in the valley, and gives fragrance to the lily which the cottager's child plucks. God is the same everywhere; it is only man that changes.

"We lack but open eye and ear
To see the orient's marvel here."

Not in one way, but in many ways does God reveal himself. "Duty" was the king of words to the Hebrew; "Beauty" the watch-word of the Greeks; "Law," of Rome; "Truth" was the search of the Hindoo; Minstrelsy and Chivalry the inspiration of the middle ages; Science and Inventions of the nineteenth century.

"Whatever road I take, it joins the street
Which leadeth all who walk it Thee to meet."

To every search there is a quick response. The experience of all nations proves the truth of the oriental couplet,

"Who comes toward me an inch through doubtings dim
In blazing light I do advance a yard towards him."

Some time ago I dropped into the Pacific Garden Mission, on Van Buren street. A man stood up and said: "I had been to the mission many times, I had heard much of what the Lord had done for Isaiah and Paul, but that did no good to me; but one night a brother took me by the hand and said, 'The Lord will help you as He has helped me, and I will help you if you try.' That night I went home and did not get drunk, and ever since I have been a redeemed

man." "One more question," said the skillful leader. "Did you find any way to get along after that?" "Yes," was the reply. "Inside of four days another man of God found me a good position on Michigan avenue, and I earn $18 a month, and every one around the house loves me."

This story reveals the saving forces of that mission and all missions. God revealed himself to that poor soul, through the human heart in Chicago, more than through the revelations of Horeb to Moses. What he thought to be exceptional was but a small glimmering of the light that floods the world. Stand, then, oh soul, erect. Clothe yourself with present sanctities. Earthly energies bring heavenly peace. Human struggles relate themselves to divine helpfulness. Every potency in man is a palpable revelation of the omnipotency of God. Let us, then, putting off our shoes of indolence and selfishness, stand with the naked feet of self-sacrifice on this ground made sacred by the consecration of the past, the sanctities of the present, and the possibilities of the future.

Fifty years ago, Emerson said to the Harvard scholars: "Confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparations, to the American scholar."

This confidence in the "unsearched might of man" will never be realized until our churches forget their dogmatic differences and doctrinal disputes, and unite in teaching the simple but great Gospel of Character; not until through morality we climb to God, and through ethics we reach that faith in God that rests on personal experience. The faith of Moses and Jesus makes the nearest mountain of duty the Horeb heights of revelation. When we put all our might into the right, we shall find that potency that saves sinners unto life eternal. Then we shall evermore walk with the unsandaled feet of reverence among Present Sanctities, the eternal realities of the living God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."

THE CLAIMS OF THE CHILDREN.

LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED; FOR IT IS NOT MEET TO TAKE THE CHILDREN'S BREAD AND CAST IT TO THE DOGS.—*Mark vii. 28.*

The children are our divinely appointed executors for the future. What are their claims upon us?

1. *The child has a right to be well born.* Not regeneration, but generation is to be the chief concern of the new ethics. When religion shall sanctify all that pertains to the perpetual incarnation of the Divine in human form through birth, our preachers will have less to say about second birth. A child that is decently born the first time has less need of being born again than the hap-hazard child of thoughtless, consequently irreverent and sinful, parentage. Says Oliver Wendell Holmes: "If you want to reform a man you must begin with his grandfather." The law of heredity is as beautiful as it is solemn, as encouraging as it is terrible; for it not only prolongs our weaknesses, but it also perpetuates our virtues. It indeed brings our vices out in definite outlines; they are developed like the shadows on the sensitive plate of the photographer; but they also

make emphatic our excellencies. That which we longed for, but missed, becomes the endowment of our child. Our ideals become its blessed destiny. Our spiritual struggles become a part of its holy fate. Children are being daily born into the world with a propulsion towards drunkard's graves. Thousands of little lives are launched upon the shores of time with a terrible momentum towards the prison and the poor-house.

Let not these facts blind us to other and beautiful facts. Thousands of children come into the world with the radience of sainthood already haloing their little heads. Out of lowliest surroundings Messiah-longings are daily fulfilled. In rudest mangers the Christ-child is still given to the world. Science does not hesitate to say that nature is better able to perpetuate the good than the bad; beauty and virtue are the more persistent forces. It is the habit of the mother cuckoo to deposit her egg in the nest of some other bird, and leave it and its outcome to the guardianship of this unsuspecting sister, who does not prove unfaithful to the trust. Thus for thousands of years, probably, the cuckoo has been nurtured by a foster-mother that can speak to it only in the homely twitterings of a foreign tongue. And yet the song of the cuckoo is one of the most persistent and correct of bird melodies. All

over Europe the cuckoo sings one song, and that a song which no mother has taught it. This song is an imperishable bequest from otherwise ungracious parents. When men and women will take this lesson home and realize the responsibility of parentage, the claims of the unborn, they will be more anxious to transmit to their offspring the cuckoo song of cheerfulness and virtue;—a song that will persist in the face of neglect, in spite of inhospitable surroundings. We need more plain speech and fearless thinking upon these matters, if ever the tide of crime and misery is to be staid in the world. The holiest functions of life are buried under a mantle of prudery which breeds coarseness. Divinest love is degraded into lust by ignorance. Young men and women, aye boys and girls, must know more of the bodies they occupy, study more diligently the laws by which God repeoples the earth every thirty years. Then the holy office of parentage will be assumed with more deliberation and the number of fractional beings will be reduced. Oh! who hath wisdom enough to discover, and life pure enough to declare, the conditions upon which the child's first claims are to be fulfilled! A fair start, a healthy body animated by a spirit that has an aptitude for the good, a passion for life in its noblest sense. Let parents think much of this.

"Something short in the making,—
Something lost on the way,
As the little Soul was taking
Its path to the break of day!

Only his mood or passion,
But it twitched an atom back;
And she, for her gods of fashion,
Filched from the pilgrim's pack.

The Father did not mean it,
The Mother did not know,
No human eye had seen it,—
But the little Soul needed it so!

Through the street there passed a cripple,
Maimed from before its birth;
On the strange face gleamed a ripple,
Like a half-dawn on the earth.

It passed,—and it awed the city,
As one not alive nor dead:
Eyes looked and brimmed with pity,—
'He is not all there,' they said.

Not all! for part is behind it,
Lying dropt on the way;
That part—could two but find it,
How welcome the end of Day!"

2. *The child has a right to a welcome into the world.* Let no one interpret the first claim in such

a way as to preclude the second. The babe is no mendicant whose arrival is to be dreaded, or whose visit is to be regretted. The woman's heart is darkly clouded in which there is no holy thirst for maternity. The man's soul is impure who desires to evade the joys of fatherhood. The babe is his own justification. In more primitive ages men used to put coin into the hands of the dead, with which to meet the expenses of the passage into the other world. The babe comes into this world with no silver in its hands; it needs none. It pays its passage in another way. It gladdens the darkest hovel, scatters sunshine in the gloomiest poverty, and makes radiant the dirtiest alley.

I believe the world has a right to loyalty and cheerfulness at the hands of those who are doomed to be childless; because I believe in brave living in adversity; but a home in which there is no welcome for a little pilgrim, where the child is not desired, is a home darkly alienated from God. Its inmates are bargaining for that old age that is indeed pitiable—one in which decrepitude is not balanced with babyhood, where the trembling voice does not mingle with children's laughter. Children have a right to a welcome. God has made this claim emphatic. He has ordained that the wealth of the household should

be above all other wealth. "These are my jewels," said the Roman matron of her children. The Irish emigrant in his railroad shanty, the Norwegian peasant in his Dakota sod-house, that give to this country energetic, stirring boys and girls, make to it a contribution of far more value than he who leaves his millions with no one to perpetuate his name. One of the most hopeful sights earth has to give is poverty's home, lit with children's smiles; while one of the saddest sights of earth is the home of the prosperous, darkened by shadows known only to God and the poor victims themselves: homes into which the divine benediction which children alone carry have been refused. Holier in the sight of God, I believe, is the woman who cherishes the child of love born in disgrace than she who fills the chambers of her heart with child hatred, spiritual infanticide. Then a welcome, thrice welcome to the children.

"For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with their caresses,
And the gladness of their looks?

They are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said,
For they are the living poems,
And all the rest are dead."

3. *Having arrived, the child has a right to sympathy.* How sad a sight is that of a friendless child. Childhood is the period of severe discipline. The spirit, like the body, must have many bruises and falls before it learns to walk. Says George Eliot:

"I never will believe that our youngest days are our happiest; childhood is only the happy time in contemplation and retrospect; to the child it is full of deep sorrows, the meaning of which is unknown; witness colic and whooping-cough, and dread of ghosts, say nothing of hell and satan, and an offended deity in the sky, who was angry when I wanted too much plum cake; and then the sorrows of older persons, which children see but cannot understand, are worse than all."

I ask not for indulgence or laxity, but patience; the ability to enter into the child's joys and sorrows, Christly appreciation, the sensibility like that which enabled Lucy Larcom to say:

"And I, for one, would much rather,
Could I merit so sweet a thing,
Be the poet of little children
Than the laureate of a king."

3. *The child has a right to its childhood.* In these days in some quarters this is the right most endangered. When I see the elaborate toilets of little girls, so closely mimicking the mother's; the high exactions of little boys, their complacent bearing under circum-

stances that ought to touch and embarrass the sensitive man; the early rush of children into so-called "society ways;" the formal parties, the late hours, the premature accomplishment so desirable at thirty, so alarming at thirteen,—I tremble lest childhood may become a lost art, and babes be entirely robbed of the most important period in their development—the productive, unconscious growth of earlier years. I remember that John Stuart Mill, Harriet Martineau, and other genius-ridden souls, have had minds that early showed a strength that did not weaken in later years; but still I think it is true that the lad, who at twelve is passed around as a "little gentleman," with the society accent upon the phrase, is in danger of being a prig at twenty-one, and before he is thirty he will sneer at the enthusiasm of life, smoke a cigar, and sigh over the stupidity of things—the world will become to him a "sucked orange." The "little lady" whose self-consciousness is thoroughly aroused at twelve, whose heart is burdened with the problems of drapery and social jealousy, will likely be a flirt at eighteen, a listless wife at twenty-five, and an unhappy, gossiping woman at forty. John Fiske, with clearness and originality, has shown that the higher development of man and society depend upon the prolongation of infancy. Multiply the years of recep-

tivity, extend the period of plasticity, and you enlarge the outcome of that life; you increase the variations from the original type; you emphasize its individuality. It is cruel then to desecrate the unconscious period with our hot-house process, and our social ambitions.

Not long ago, riding along in a railroad car, I scraped an acquaintance with a little five-year-old, and had the little Miss on my knee. She had been visiting in Chicago, and was now returning to her home in a more western city. "What was the most interesting thing that you saw in Chicago?" I asked. She confessed to not having "seen much" because they had "been invited out a great deal," but she had "been to Marshall Field's and had seen the most lovely dress goods; and it was very cheap, too." "Would you like to live in Chicago all the time?" I asked. She replied, "I suppose it would be perfectly elegant to live in Chicago after one gets acquainted with the people. But then," she added, demurely, "as the old saying is, you know there is no place like home." I tried to cap the quotation with something appropriate from Emerson or Browning, but I could think of nothing, and so I put the little woman down with mingled sadness and shame.

Oh! let not the children be robbed of that child

hood that is necessarily a period of bashfulness and simplicity. Let the tender twig be put into the sunlight, but do not try to hasten the bud, blossom and fruit under artificial glass. Let it be remembered that the twig is not the beginning of a blazing peony, or even a more dignified dahlia; but it is the beginning of a tree. Let it grow as grows the hickory, elm or oak.

5. *The child has a right to a training that will enable it to take care of itself.* It has a right to an education that will help it to grapple with the stern necessities of life. David Dudley Field in his recent article in the *Forum* tells us that there are twelve thousand children under twelve years of age in New York city who have no homes. Seven thousand of them do not know where they are to sleep at night, and the others "have sheltering revolting to behold."

There is no remedy for this except to train these children so that eventually they will be competent to provide for themselves. Pitiable indeed is the education that does not teach one to think. Still more radical are the defects of the system that does not teach one to work, increase one's external resources, add to his power of dealing with things. The child has a right to an educated hand, a trained eye. The time is coming when parents will be held responsible

of grave misdemeanor when they turn a son or daughter out into the world with no aptitudes for a livelihood. The boy who cannot build a fire, saw a board, drive a nail or harness a horse, is uneducated, foolish, although he may read seven languages and be able to trace all the constellations. The girl is uncultured, unfitted for life, who cannot make a loaf of bread, fit a garment, or darn a stocking, even though she be an adept in French, and an expert on the piano. The woman gives a dishonest hand at the marriage altar if it, co-operating with the head, cannot earn for her a living should it become necessary. This is why the kindergarten, manual-training schools, and all the technical discipline of the new education are in line with the rights of children, and represent the claims of the child.

6. *The child has a right to a moral training.* Professor Seeley has been giving us some statistics recently far more alarming than those of illiteracy. He shows that the ratios of insanity and idiocy in this country have been steadily increasing, as have also those of the deaf mute and the blind. In 1850 we had one insane to every 1,468 persons; in 1880 one to every 656, and the other figures are about in the same proportion. Allowing for a great difference in the skill and thoroughness of the census-takers,

there yet remains enough to prove that the moral nature has not kept pace with the material advancement of our country; the heart has not kept balanced with the head; the will has not been developed sufficiently to stand the added strain placed upon it.

Yesterday the call in education was for a scientific training, a study of things rather than of words. To-day it is for manual training, disciplined nerves and skilled muscle to serve an intelligent brain. To-morrow it will be for ethical training, a systematic enforcement of the law of Right, a study of the science of Duty. We are about to recognize in our educational systems that neither truth nor beauty can be successfully discovered by the bad. That child alone is prepared to live whose life is grounded in integrity; who aims at that which is excellent, rather than that which is easy; to whom justice means more than success, and who rates character above popularity.

7. *The child has a right to a religious culture.* Morality in its highest development is possible only under the sanctions and inspirations of religion. Practical ethics must be rooted in ideal ethics. The adjustment of the parts is possible only when the soul is haunted with a sense of the harmonious whole. The child claims at our hands not only religious

training but something infinitely more important—religious influences. To borrow a phrase from Miss Cobb the child has a right "to be presented to the objects it is made to love and reverence."

To recapitulate, the claims of a child are:

1. To be well born.
2. To a welcome into the world.
3. To the sympathy of its elders.
4. To a long childhood.
5. To a practical education.
6. To a moral training.
7. To religious influences; spiritual aptitude; an appetite for heavenly things; a thirst for perfection.

Now, what are we going to do about this? Let us begin by confessing the claims. Margaret Fuller Ossoli wrote in her diary after the birth of her child: "I am the mother of an immortal being. Oh! God, be merciful unto me, a sinner." Let this confession and this aspiration sink deep into the heart of father and mother. The child has claims which neither one can meet alone. There are more half-orphans in the world than the death record shows: children of fathers who delegate all the parental responsibility to the mothers, while they make money or attend politics: mothers who place their babes to the borrowed breasts of servants.

The united resources of the home must be concentrated upon the destinies of the child, and even this

is not enough. The father cannot superintend the details of the text-book, nor the mother assume all the functions of a teacher. So the State wisely comes in with its public schools. This country pays one hundred million dollars annually to school-teachers alone. But the State is made up of individuals who hold widely different views concerning the deepest verities of life. The most permanent forces of the soul are the religious forces. As things now are, all will admit that our homes do not, and the public schools must not, undertake adequately to develop the religious powers of the child. One does not, the other must not, give the child some working thoughts upon the ever-pressing problems of soul, represented by the words God, Soul, Death, Immortality, Heaven, Hell, Prayer. Still more true is it that neither the home nor the school bring the child under the influences of these forces, although they represent realities more profound than any intellectual conception can be. Thus it is that the child is landed at the church door. The plainest and simplest common sense, the severest utilitarian logic, brings the child to the public altar of religion and humbly asks the coöperation of some fraternity of souls, some church, to help nurture it into a tender and devout manhood or womanhood.

"Let the children first be filled." To heed this request seems to me to be the prime mission of the church. I have spoken of the fate for good or ill that lies back of birth. Perhaps there is more danger in this presence of losing sight of the other truth, namely: the tremendous power of the measureless forces that shape the human soul after birth. The brain of the child and that of the baby chimpanzee are strikingly alike at birth; there is an immense difference between the adult brain of the lowest man and that of the highest ape. The surface of the latter remains, in the main, smooth, unimpressed, while the former is creased and corrugated by countless impressions received during life, all of which affect, modify and multiply the power of soul. I have spoken of the persistency of the cuckoo song. Let it be balanced with the testimony of Francis Galton, who says that "deaf mutes who are first taught to communicate freely with others, after they have passed the period of boyhood, say that the meaning of the church service which they have attended, accompanied with their parents, knelt in prayer and studied the whole spectacular side of worship, has been utterly unintelligible to them; the ritual has touched no inherited chord in their nature; that it might move, however dumbly, the religious nature."

Is not this an awful warning to the indifferent parent who, in the name of liberality, allows his children to grow up untouched by any religious views, either at home or at church, into an apathy of soul, an absence of reverence, like unto that of the deaf mute our scientist speaks of?

Archbishop Hughes of the Catholic Church spoke like a scientist when he said, "Give me the children until they are twelve years old, and I care not what you do with them after that." May I not state the truth from the other side? The child that is allowed to grow up in an indifferent, undevout, non-worshipful atmosphere until he is fifteen will be maimed religiously for life. He will have been deprived permanently of some of the most blessed memories, abiding safeguards and tender influences that life possesses. I had rather be the son of an Indian chief, born in a wigwam, fettered at birth with the inheritance of barbaric ancestory, and then be allowed from the birth-moment to grow up in a home of real refinement and true religion—than to be born in Cambridge, a son of a Harvard Professor, with the best blood of puritan New England in my veins and to be doomed at birth to the life of the wigwam and the influence of the plain.

May God help the church to become a molding

power over adult lives; but let us ever remember that this will be very small compared with the influence for good that it may throw around the souls of children. Not what a church teaches or the social pleasure it gives determines its power—though these are important—but that totality of influences, the power of habit, the joy of co-operation, the delights of fellowship, the contagion of earnestness, the power of example, the weight of character, the awe of worship—these are the tremendous forces that has lent sublime potency to the crudest conventicle and makes deathless the power of any and every church. I know the defects of the churches, how imperfect they all are, and yet the child pleads with you for those helps which churches alone do give. Its helps cannot be catalogued. It is now a thought, oftener an emotion, now the emphatic pronunciation of the word "duty," and again the reverent utterance of the word "God" in such a way as to rebuke the profanity of the street and the flippancy of the playground. Give to the child these helps, honor this claim in highest fashion, and you dare not ignore all the other claims spoken of. "Let the children first be filled, for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."

ESSAYS OF JAMES VILA BLAKE.

SUBJECTS:—Choice, Faculty, Public Education, Happiness and Time, Vainglory, Luck, Seeing Good Things, Side Lights of Intelligence, Individuality, Questions of Heroism, Praising, Censure, Flattery, Government, Handwriting, Knowledge, Meditation, Common Sense, Requital, Anger, Judgment of Others, Patience, Enemies, Immortal Life, Death, Emergency, Conscience Character as a Work, Superiority.

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